DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 219 907 EC 143 188

AUTHOR Perelman, Phyllis F.; Pineda, Maria Luisa
TITLE Introduction of the Data-Based Individualized Model of Education in Central America.
PUB DATE 15 Apr 82
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (60th, Houston, TX, April 11-16, 1982, Session Th-96).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Inservice Teacher Education; Mainstreaming; *Models; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Special Education
IDENTIFIERS *Central America; Honduras

ABSTRACT

The paper describes, in both English and Spanish, a data based model for providing preservice and inservice training to regular and special class teachers on procedures for teaching mainstreamed handicapped children. The model involves the following steps: (1) referral of a child by his classroom teacher for special education services; (2) student evaluation; (3) specification of an instructional objective; (4) development and implementation of teaching/learning procedures; and (5) evaluation of teaching/learning procedures and child's progress toward attainment of the specified instructional objective. The model, found to be successful in Vermont, has been used to provide technical assistance in several Central American countries, including Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala. Rather than focusing on the referred student, the model, as used in Honduras, addresses group defined needs (such as better public relations in special education) as a model objective, the use of media to contact parents and others as a plan of action, and evaluation based on increased awareness and support of special education. (SW)

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INTRODUCTION OF THE DATA-BASED INDIVIDUALIZED MODEL OF EDUCATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Phyllis F. Perelman, M.Ed.
College of Education and
Social Services
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont 05405

Maria Luisa Pineda, B.S.
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

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Presentation at 60th Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children, Houston, Texas, April 15, 1982.

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For more than a decade at the University of Vermont, preservice and inservice training of special education teachers and educational specialists has included the "data-based individualized model of education" (Perelman and Fox, 1974).

Even before the passage of P.L. 94-142 (the Education for all Handicapped Children Act) in 1975, Vermont was addressing the need for mainstreaming and education in the least restrictive environment. Especially in a small state like Vermont, economic and geographic factors suggested keeping most children, especially the mildly and moderately handicapped, in regular classrooms and providing additional training and support systems to teachers already in place in the schools. The need was soon recognized to provide that same kind of training for preservice teachers in special education, the mainstream educators being trained in the undergraduate Responsive Teacher Program.

THE MODEL

When a child in not progressing satisfactorily in his educational program, the regular or special class teacher, often with help from a consulting teacher, learning specialist, or other professional, needs to arrange for more effective teaching/learning procedures. One successful means of providing this help to classroom teachers has been through the use of the data-based model.

The beginning of the process is the referral of a child by his classroom teacher for special education services, due to a deficit in language, arithmetic, or social behavior. A measurement is then taken of his entry level, which, in a particular curriculum area, represents his mastery of skills and knowledge in that area at the time of referral. All behaviors in the child's repertoire

related to the defined target behaviors are included in this entry level measure.

The next step is the specification of an instructional objective, derived from the Magerian model (1961), as expanded by Wheeler and Fox (1972), which describes where the child should be in the learning process. Included in the instructional objective are a description of behavior that can be reliably observed and measured by at least two independent observers, a statement of the conditions under which the behavior is to be observed, and a statement of the criteria for acceptable performance.

Teaching/learning procedures are then developed and implemented so that the referred student may move from his entry level state to the desired level specified in the instructional objective. Inherent in the model being described are four basic principles derived from applied behavior analysis: reinforcement, scheduling of reinforcement, shaping, and the effects of antecedent stimuli.

The final step in the model involves evaluation, on a regular and continuous basis, usually daily, of the teaching/learning procedures and the child's progress toward attainment of the specified instructional objective. Comparisons are made of the student's progress with his entry level performance, thus permitting an evaluation of the teaching/learning procedures. If the child is progressing adequately toward the instructional objective, the procedures are judged to be effective. If the measures indicate that the child is not making adequate progress, the procedures are modified until they are demonstrated to be effective.

Special educators who have been working under the provisions of P.L. 94-142 for the past four years will recognize the parallels

with requirements of the individualized education program. The IEP also requires specification of present level of performance, annual goals and short-term objectives, specific educational services (including personnel and dates), and evaluation procedures. Vermont teachers and consulting teacher/learning specialists familiar with the data-based model have felt extremely comfortable in the implementation of IEP's for special education students.

Central America

Success with the data-based model in Vermont seemed to offer a logical focus for technical assistance in special education on several occasions in the past five years: (1) a sabbatical leave in Costa Rica, (2) two visits to Honduras, the second under the auspices of the Partners of the Americas, and (3) at the Guatemala international convention of the Partners of the Americas.

In Costa Rica the data-based model was introduced in numerous training sessions held with faculty members at the National University of Costa Rica and at the Diagnostic School at Children's Hospital. Through affiliation with the Latin American Center of IRSEN, training was later expanded to include special education leaders in the Ministry of Public Education, teacher trainers from the University of Costa Rica, and special educators in the Peace Corps.

Similarly, in Honduras, using both the original English and the newly translated Spanish versions of the model, this method of individualizing instruction was presented to the directors and faculty members of the three special education facilities--Instituto Psicopedagogica "Juana Leclerc", Centro de Investigacion y Rehabilitacion ("CIRE"), and Instituto Sampedrano de Educacion Especial ("ISEE"), as well as to Peace Corps volunteers assigned

to the three facilities.

In Guatemala the model was briefly included as part of a presentation describing the way the needs of special education are met in Vermont.

All the educators involved in these training sessions seemed responsive to this means of providing education to children requiring special education. Obviously, ongoing training and support with the model would be required to ensure success with its use.

An exciting adaptation of the data-based model evolved during the most recent Honduras visit, and appeared useful in assisting special education personnel, school administrators, and lay leaders in program planning. The model began, instead of with a referred learner, with Special Education in Honduras as the focus.

For entry level the group addressed the existing facilities--Juana Leclerc, CIRE, and ISEE, and listed the available resources in each of those facilities: number of students, number of teachers and staff, curriculum, financial resources, organization, and so forth.

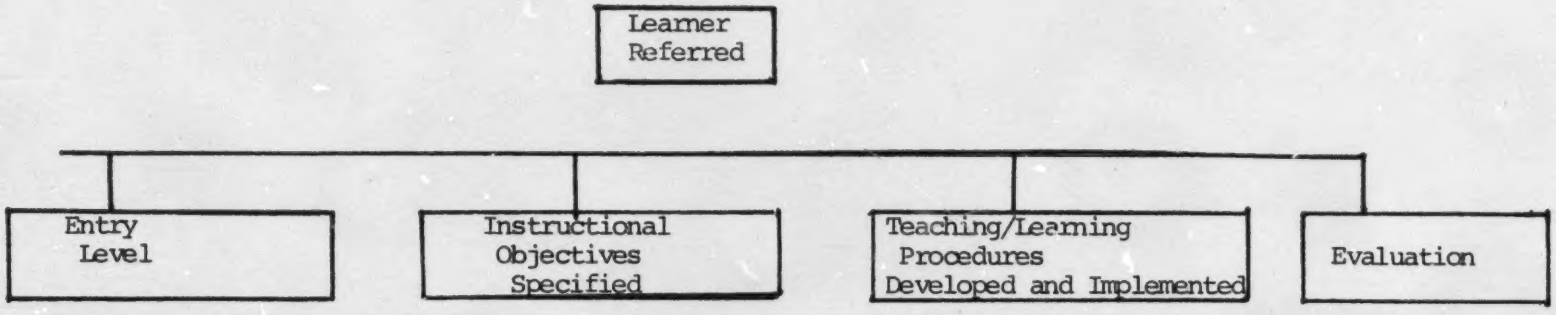
Under the category of objective, the group defined needs, such as better public relations and organization of a coalition devoted to special education.

Substituting for the teaching/learning procedures in the original model was a plan of action, to include use of the media (newspapers, radio, television), methods of contacting parents, professionals, and others, interaction with governmental institutions such as the Ministries of Health, Work, and Education, the National Junta of Social Welfare, and the National Council for Rehabilitation, as well as private funding.

Evaluation would be based on increased awareness and support of special education in Honduras.

The most immediate outcome of the adaptation for program planning appeared to be better communication among the participants, and plans for regular meeting times to continue work on the plan of action. Encouraging reports from Honduras since that time indicate that additional support has been forthcoming from the government within the past year. Services beyond the three facilities described have been expanded to include eight resource classrooms throughout the country. Within the Ministry of Education one person from the Ministry is working with a Peace Corps volunteer to promote further work in special education. The data-based individualized model of education appears to have considerable practical application in Central America, by demonstrating an accountable method for developing and evaluating teaching and planning activities.

Data-Based Individualized Model of Education



UN MODELO DE EDUCACION INDIVIDUALIZADA*

Cuando un niño no está logrando el progreso educativo esperado, el maestro de aula junto con el maestro orientador en educación especial planifican la aplicación de procedimientos más efectivos de enseñanza/aprendizaje. La orientación busca el entrenamiento para la aplicación de un modelo de educación especial (diagrama 1). El maestro aprende a emplear los fundamentos de la aplicación del análisis de conducta y la instrucción individualizada como medio de implementar una educación más especial dentro del aula.

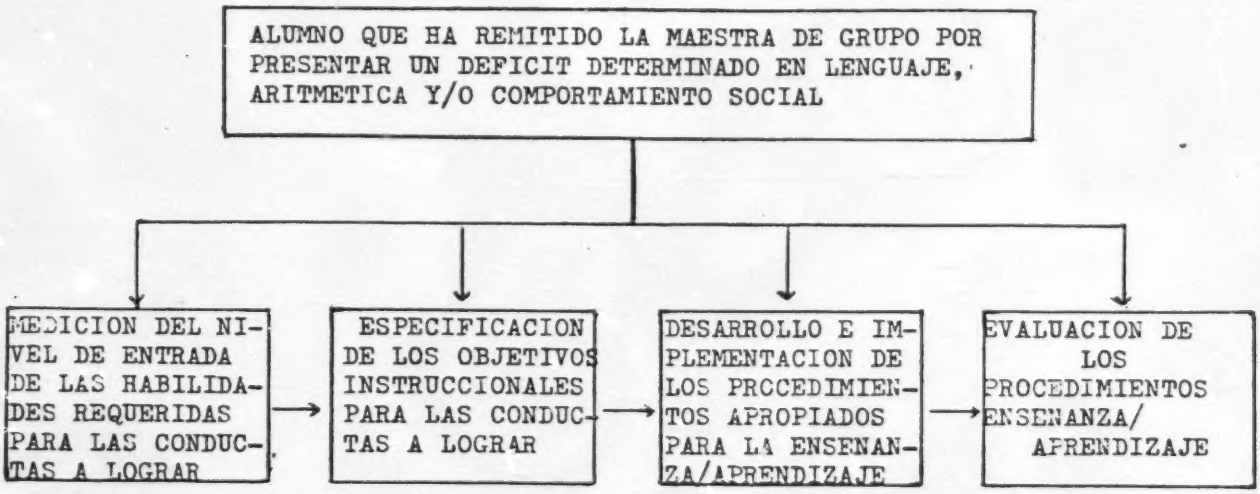

ALUMNO QUE HA REMITIDO LA MAESTRA DE GRUPO POR PRESENTAR UN DEFICIT DETERMINADO EN LENGUAJE, ARITMETICA Y/O COMPORTAMIENTO SOCIAL
MEDICION DEL NIVEL DE ENTRADA DE LAS HABILIDADES REQUERIDAS PARA LAS CONDUCTAS A LOGRAR
ESPECIFICACION DE LOS OBJETIVOS INSTRUCCIONALES PARA LAS CONDUCTAS A LOGRAR
DESARROLLO E IMPLEMENTACION DE LOS PROCEDIMIENTOS APROPIADOS PARA LA ENSENANZA/APRENDIZAJE
EVALUACION DE LOS PROCEDIMIENTOS ENSENANZA/ APRENDIZAJE

Diagrama 1.

Un Modelo Utilizado en el Campo de la Educación Especial para Niños con Dificultades en el Aula de Escolaridad Común

El proceso se inicia cuando el maestro de grado considera que un alumno necesita atención especial por manifestar un déficit en las areas de lenguaje, aritmética y/o comportamiento social. De acuerdo al modelo, un alumno de escolaridad común, de nivel primario, requiere de los servicios de educación especial al presentar las siguientes características:

1. El maestro remite el alumno al maestro orientador. Esta remisión debe incluir un informe indicando los déficits en las areas de lenguaje, aritmética y/o comportamiento social.
2. Los niveles de lenguaje, aritmética y/o comportamiento social que el maestro ha indicado, deben estar por debajo de los objetivos mínimos. Los objetivos mínimos son las destrezas de lenguaje, aritmética, y/o comportamiento social que se espera de todos los alumnos de cierto grado en fecha determinada durante el año escolar.

El nivel de entrada de un alumno, en determinada área del curriculum, es su grado de destreza y conocimiento a la fecha de evaluación. El nivel de entrada representa la totalidad de los haberes en el repertorio del niño que son relevantes a las conductas por lograr.

Después de que el nivel de entrada del niño que ha sido remitido ha sido medido, se especifican los objetivos de instrucción. Un objetivo de enseñanza incluye:

(a) una conducta definible, de manera confiable, por lo menos a dos observadores independientes,

(b) las condiciones bajo las cuales debe observarse la conducta. y

(c) los criterios que determinan una conducta aceptable.

Los procedimientos de enseñanza/aprendizaje son desarrollados e implementados para que el alumno remitido pase de su nivel de entrada a el nivel establecido en el objetivo instruccional. En este modelo, los procedimientos involucran cuatro principios básicos de la aplicación del análisis de conducta:
(a) reforzamiento, (b) programas de reforzamiento, (c) moldeamiento y (d) los efectos de los estímulos previos.

La evaluación de los procedimientos de enseñanza/aprendizaje completa este modelo. El progreso logrado por el alumno, desde el nivel de entrada hasta la adquisición de los objetivos instruccionales es medidc periodicamente. El nivel de progreso se compara con el nivel de entrada, lo que permite que se haga una evaluación efectiva de los procedimientos enseñanza/aprendizaje. Se estima que los procedimientos son efectivos si el alumno está progresando

de manera adecuada en el logro de los objetivos instruccionales; de lo contrario, se modifican los procedimientos.

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